



# TERRIBLE PRICE OF VACCINE INEQUALITY

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# Socialist Worker

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## TORY POLICIES KILL MIGRANTS

# LET



# THEM



# IN!

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## THE THINGS THEY SAY

**'In recent years we have seen Doctor Who, Ghostbusters, Luke Skywalker, the Equaliser, all replaced by women, and men are left with the Krays and Tommy Shelby. Is there any wonder we are seeing so many young men committing crime?'**

Tory MP Nick Fletcher

**'The leadership should continue to push the far left back to the margins'**

Tony Blair lays out his plan for Labour to succeed

**'Reject the wokeism'**

The slogan Blair thinks Labour needs

**'Whitehall's woke blob tries to ban Christmas'**

The Mail on Sunday takes up the baton to stop people using the word holidays rather than Christmas



# Tories admit a bit but Kuwait flight cover up continues

**FOREIGN SECRETARY Liz Truss officially apologised over a 30-year cover-up last week. But her statement was designed to hide a bigger lie.**

Truss admitted that a warning was not passed to British Airways (BA) of an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Passengers and crew on the BA flight were then taken hostage.

The British government had long insisted that it did not know an Iraqi offensive was underway until after the flight landed. Now it has confirmed that the British ambassador to Kuwait had confirmed an invasion in time for the flight to reroute.

The warning was passed on to Number 10 and MI6 but not BA. But Truss continued

**BRITISH AIRWAYS was not told about the invasion of Kuwait**

to deny that the reason the flight was allowed to land was because there were special forces soldiers on board.

The government wanted them to reach Kuwait and sacrificed the rest of the passengers.

A political intelligence officer at the British embassy

in Kuwait City and some of the operatives themselves have confirmed this.

The soldiers left the plane before Iraqi forces seized the hostages.

Truss's apology did not impress those who were used as "human shields". Businessman Barry Manners

was on the flight and was held captive for more than four months in Iraq.

Last week he said, "I live in the real world, I'm not a snowflake—if they pulled us into a room and said, 'Terribly sorry, we had to do it, have a year off paying income tax and here's a gold card for British Airways, keep your gob shut', I would say 'fair enough'."

"But when people lie to me, then I get upset. So, no, I don't accept the apology. It's a fudge."

"I know what I saw going on with that plane. I know they were soldiers."

Manners added, "I believe in democracy and the rule of law. But it's confirmed what so many people have said about this government, and perhaps all governments, that they lie."

**THE DAY before at least 27 people drowned in the Channel, the government announced a new immigration detention centre for women will open in County Durham.**

Derwentside removal centre will replace Yarl's Wood in Bedfordshire as a place to cage women and then deport them.

The Home Office hopes the centre will be operational by the end of the year. The site previously served as the Medomsley detention centre for young offenders and was the scene of widespread abuse for decades before it shut in 1988.

Derwentside

**KEIR STARMER** unveiled a new Labour "council of skills advisers" in his speech to the CBI bosses' group last week. There's Labour right winger David Blunkett and Praful Nargund, chief executive officer of IVF firm Create Fertility. Finally there's Rachel Sandby-Thomas. She was director general for skills, deregulation at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

## Cameron lobbied Lord in Greensill con

DAVID CAMERON lobbied Lloyds Banking Group to reverse a decision to cut ties with the ailing Greensill Capital, appealing to a board member who he had made a lord while prime minister.

Cameron lobbied Lloyds in January, according to the Financial Times, when he contacted Lord James Lupton, a director of the bank who had previously been a Conservative party treasurer.

He successfully persuaded the bank to continue doing business with Greensill.

Lupton, Tory treasurer from 2013 to 2016, has donated more than £3 million to the Conservative Party and was

**Lord Lupton- lobbied**

appointed to the House of Lords in 2015.

Cameron earned millions of pounds as a boardroom adviser to Greensill, the supply-chain finance company. Its collapse earlier this year dragged the former prime minister into Westminster's biggest lobbying scandal for a generation.

Months before Greensill's failure in March, Lloyds indicated that it would stop doing business with the group.

This jeopardised a finance scheme for NHS pharmacies operated by Greensill that relied heavily on Lloyds for funding.

Britain's public spending watchdog said last month there was no evidence the programme provided any benefit to taxpayers.

But after Cameron's plea, the bank reconsidered its decision and agreed to continue funding the pharmacies.

Lupton had declared his relationship with Cameron when passing on the former prime minister's request.

But some people inside the bank found the former prime minister's intervention surprising and unwelcome.

They said it was decisive in causing the U-turn.

## Tory tax scam donor rents out site to stop tax scams

HM REVENUE and Customs has struck a deal to relocate tax workers into a new office complex in Newcastle owned by major Conservative party donors through an offshore company based in a tax haven.

The department's planned new home in the north east of England is part of a scheme developed by a British Virgin Islands entity controlled by the billionaire property tycoons David and Simon Reuben.

The deal will see officials at the government department responsible for preventing tax avoidance working from a site owned by a subsidiary of a company

based in a secretive offshore tax jurisdiction.

The Reuben brothers, their family members and businesses have donated a combined £1.9 million to the Tories.

A few days before the office announcement the brothers were reported to have shared a table with Boris Johnson at an exclusive Tory party fundraising dinner.

David Reuben's son, Jamie, is a close ally of the prime minister and has served as a Tory party treasurer.

He has donated more than £750,000 to the party since Johnson entered Downing Street.

## Stamp duty holiday meant rich cashed in

THE STAMP duty holiday introduced after the first coronavirus lockdown last year amounted to a £6.4 billion tax break for homebuyers in England.

Roughly half the savings benefited those who bought properties worth more than £500,000, an analysis by property agent Savills showed.

The big losers were first-time buyers, who encountered intense competition where previously they had enjoyed a specific stamp duty tax break of their own.

Savills' analysis found that during the stamp

**Free for all for rich**

duty holiday sales of homes worth between £500,000 and £1 million were up 71 percent while £1 million-plus transactions jumped 75 percent. House prices increased 13.2 percent over the year to June 2021, according to the Office for National Statistics.

This was the highest annual growth rate since November 2004.

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# Omicron is blowback from global vaccine inequality

**THE NEW Covid variant now spreading from South Africa is the terrible price we will all pay for the ruling classes' refusal to make vaccinating the world its top priority.**

The new strain of the disease, named "Omicron" by the World Health Organisation, is thought to be far more transmissible than even the Delta variant.

Viruses can undergo rapid change when they are allowed to spread. Every so often, a virus changes in a way that helps it survive.

That is what has happened in South Africa's Gauteng province, which includes the capital, Johannesburg.

Less than a quarter of the South African population has been fully vaccinated. That figure is far lower among the poorest.

Scientists are particularly concerned about changes to the coronavirus's spike protein—that helps the virus enter human cells.

Some of these mutations make it harder for the antibodies in our blood to recognise the virus, and could potentially mean Covid evading existing vaccines.

## Warned

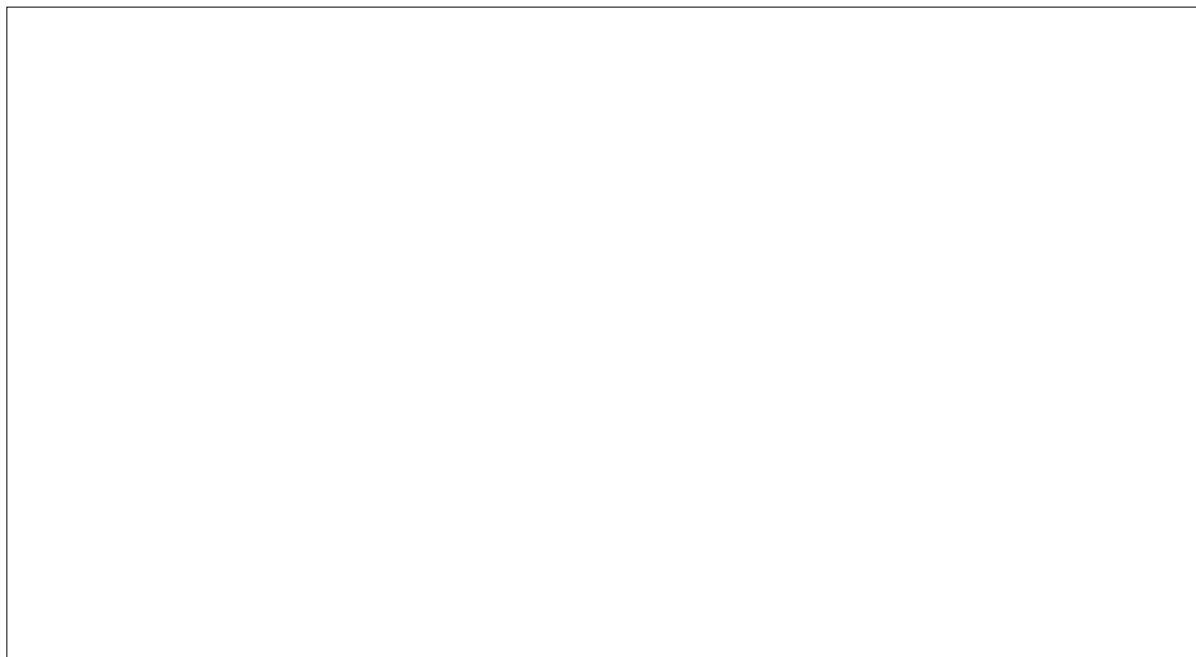
Scientists have long warned this would happen if large populations were left unvaccinated.

"Told you so," said Francois Venter, a researcher at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. "It feels like these rich countries have learned absolutely nothing," he said.

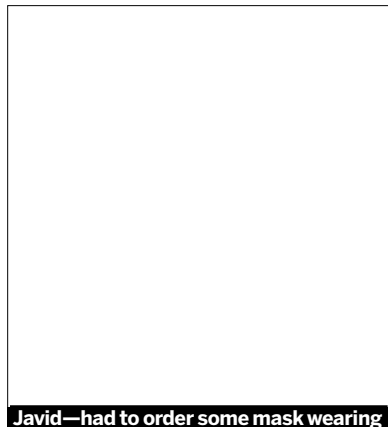
Venter is right. For over a year the World Health Organisation and others have warned, "No one is safe until everyone is safe."

Governments in the Global South, and South Africa in particular, begged Big Pharma and its state backers to lift patents so vaccine production could start in poorer countries.

But Britain was among countries



**A HEALTH worker in South Africa—where less than a quarter of people are vaccinated—prepares a jab**



**Javid—had to order some mask wearing**

the UN Covax programme—which Western governments proclaimed as the way to vaccinate the Global South—has failed to deliver 2 billion doses it promised by the end of this year.

The only "solutions" Britain has offered is to slam close the door to people from South Africa.

There are already cases in Britain, so the ending of flights is purely cosmetic.

## Boundary

"You close down the boundary with Africa, then you close the boundary with Belgium, then you close the boundary with somewhere else," said Alessandro Vespignani, a Northeastern University professor. "But every time you close it, it's a little late."

Tory health secretary Sajid Javid was at pains to say on Sunday that

they were "nowhere near" imposing new restrictions. But he was forced to order the wearing of masks in shops and on public transport in England from Tuesday this week.

Javid said people should plan for "Christmas as normal". That's a dangerous attitude.

We face a new form of the virus that can more easily infect others and may well be able to bypass vaccinations.

And, yet the health secretary thinks it is just fine to cram family members into a cramped room.

Profiteering and the bosses' narrow self-interest created the conditions for Covid to spread and mutate into more dangerous forms.

Now, they and their Tory friends' only response is to demand the cash registers keep ringing up sales, and business as usual continues in our schools and workplaces.

## Mask wearing ought to apply everywhere now

THE TORIES' hatred of face masks that protect people from infection is creating regulation chaos.

From this week, it will be mandatory to wear a mask on public transport, in banks and Post Offices, and in hairdressers.

And government guidance advises people to wear masks in "crowded indoor spaces" and to take a lateral flow test before socialising with other people.

But keen to help out their rich buddies who own the hospitality industry, none of the rules apply to pubs and restaurants.

With their large concentrations

of people, moving around the building, spending sometimes hours in an often unventilated space, bars and eateries are prime infection sites.

Yet, "health minister", Edward Argar said people standing at the bar are often only there for a short time, and will then "sip a drink on the way back to their table, where they'll be seated".

This is not always the case—toilet visits, socialising, cigarette breaks, dancing and more are all incredibly common in bars.

But to Argar apparently, there's no need to wear a mask.

## Tories' plans fall short

TORY MINISTERS toured TV studios last weekend to insist the government has a plan to deal with the spread of the Omicron variant.

Sajid Javid told the BBC it's possible to quarantine contacts of those with the new strain for ten days because of a characteristic of some PCR tests.

Near instantaneous results would help slow the spread in Britain, he said.

Some PCR tests can indeed tell if someone is infected with the Omicron variant because the results show the "S" gene as not present.

But under Britain's privatised testing, less than a third of people will get a "just in time" result.

The equipment in most laboratories simply isn't advanced enough to detect the S gene.

So the vast majority of tests will have to be "gene sequenced"—a process that takes days.

## Officials

That means in most cases, health officials will not be able to tell the difference between someone with the Delta variant and those with the Omicron.

And it means close contacts of someone with Omicron won't be required to isolate if they're fully vaccinated—until they have the results of a gene sequenced test.

This delay will almost certainly allow the spread of Omicron.

## 'Operation Rampdown'

THE TORIES are dismantling the £37 billion Test and Trace system at a time when it's most needed.

A leaked dossier last week laid bare plans to axe the shambolic system in 2022.

But a step to winding it down is already happening.

The tracing unit, run by Sitel and Serco, will end because there's "no money left".

The government's plan is in a 160-page Whitehall dossier codenamed "Operation Rampdown".

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# The Tories have the blood of refugees on their hands

by CHARLIE KIMBER

**AT LEAST 27 people drowned in the English Channel last Wednesday as they tried to reach Britain.**

This is the appalling result of an accelerating tirade of anti-refugee speeches and actions by the British and French governments—with the Tories in the vanguard.

The politicians, the media and state forces who have demonised desperate people fleeing war, poverty and environmental destruction have blood on their hands.

Those who wanted “push backs” to deter migrants with the threat of death now have what they wanted. Their protestations and sorrow should be rejected as what it is—hypocritical filth.

And they have followed it up by proposing even more appalling methods.

Immediately after the drownings, to look tough and calm to his rabid backbenchers, Boris Johnson wrote to French president Emmanuel Macron calling for more repression.

He wanted France to immediately start taking back all migrants who land in England after crossing the Channel—regardless of their asylum claims.

Johnson also called for British forces to join French ones to conduct joint border patrols and aerial surveillance.

The whole dispute between these governments is a baseless competition to deflect blame and to avoid the real issues.

## Shipping

It is a cover for more repression targeted at people so desperate they set out in flimsy craft in freezing seas in one of the busiest shipping lanes in Europe.

Johnson had said earlier that he was “shocked, appalled and deeply saddened by the loss of life at sea.

“Now is the time for us all to step up, work together and do everything we can to stop these gangs who are getting away with murder.”

The gang getting away with murder is the government that

## BACK STORY

**Britain is not the main destination for asylum applications. Germany receives more than three times as many, France twice as many**

●The number of people coming by small boats has increased because every other method has been blocked

●Official resettlement routes are shut. The Tories closed the Syrian scheme, and the Dubs scheme for children

●In the last 18 months one Iranian got in by the official route, and none from Yemen

creates the conditions that make such tragedies inevitable.

With every new obstacle to refugees, with every racist speech, Johnson and his coterie hand out another death sentence.

Pierre Roques, coordinator of the Auberge des Migrants (Migrants’ Hostel) NGO in Calais, said the Channel “is becoming a cemetery”.

## Tactic

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, said, “Every day, people are forced to flee their home through no fault of their own.

Now is the time to end the cruel and ineffective tactic of seeking to punish or push away those who try and find safety in our country.”

Johnson and home secretary Priti Patel denounce people smugglers. By blaming people smugglers, the Tories can continue to paint crossings as illegal, organised by criminals.

Anti-refugee laws and ever harsher barriers to legal routes create the opportunity for the gangs in the first place.

The British and French governments are the friends of people smugglers, complicit in their trade.

The Tories are determined to make crossing the Channel more hazardous and deadly and to stop seafarers from offering help to migrants in flimsy boats.

That means more deaths.

REFUGEES BEING brought ashore on the Kent coast by RNLI Lifeboat staff

# ‘Safe passage’ is not enough—borders should be open for all

IN SEPTEMBER 2021, the Channel Rescue monitoring group witnessed the UK Border Force training to use jet skis to drive back migrants at sea.

Those brutal tactics are backed up by ever-more laws that will lead to more refugee deaths and repression.

A clause in the Tories’ Nationality and Borders Bill increases the sentences for smuggling into Britain from 14 years to life imprisonment.

The law would criminalise sailors and others even if they rescued an asylum seeker and landed them in Dover.

And Priti Patel is set on labelling migrants who end up steering the boats they’re stuck in across the Channel as “smugglers”.

Yet last week Keir Starmer’s Labour Party decided to go for the Tories from the right because of their “broken promises” to halt refugee crossings. They too are responsible for the mass deaths now.

After Wednesday’s drownings, Labour’s shadow home secretary Nick Thomas-Symonds called

for more measures against migrant boats and “practical law enforcement action away from the coast as well”.

Meanwhile, French presidential candidates are using the same hateful, anti-migrant rhetoric. They include fascist Marine Le Pen, far right Islamophobe Eric Zemmour and conservative right wingers such as Michel Barnier.

Other Labour, Green and SNP MPs are calling for “safe passages” for refugees attempting to reach Britain. This is often used to avoid saying “open the borders”.

Safe passage means extending the existing framework of official resettlement routes, which currently take in just 1 percent of refugees worldwide.

Safe routes should be given to refugees so that refugees drowning in the Channel never happens again.

But calling for more of the same “legal” routes ignores other problems—such as refugees waiting for years in camps across Europe and a racist, Islamophobic and rigged asylum

system.

Opening the borders removes the lottery-based resettlement system and means all who want to enter Britain are able to do so.

Refugees should not have to rely on dangerous and deadly routes into Britain. But the demand for safety should not be reliant on fulfilling the Home Office’s checklist of who is and isn’t admissible and desirable.

Anti-racists have to demand open borders and a welcome for refugees. Anything less leads to more corpses in the Channel.

# London protesters take rage to Downing Street

ANTI-RACISTS TOOK to Whitehall in central London last Saturday to pin the blame for refugee deaths on the Tory government.

Some 300 people joined an emergency protest called by Stand Up To Racism (SUTR).

It was one of several protests called in towns and cities across Britain in anger at the deaths.

After rallying on Whitehall, protesters marched to Downing Street with a message for Boris Johnson. “The blood is on his hands,” said SUTR co-convenor Weyman Bennett.

A refugee from Syria gave powerful testimony of his own dangerous Channel crossing.

“Crossing from France was not easy, for me or the people with me,” he said. “But it was the only option we had.

“I was terrified that our boat would sink. The waves got bigger and one woman started crying. She asked people to look after her child in case she died.

“It was something I wouldn’t wish even for my enemy.”

Many protesters said refugees

coming to Britain were fleeing war and poverty created by the West.

“Every government is trying to shift responsibility,” one protester, Aamir, told Socialist Worker.

“They should stop bombing other countries and creating refugees.

Instead they make it hard for people to come here.

“They should make it more logistically possible for people to claim asylum.”

## Championed

Others said the Tories’ coming Nationality and Borders Bill—championed by home secretary Priti Patel—would cause more deaths.

Protesters all demanded that migrants and refugees be allowed to come to Britain safely. “It was complete luck for me to live here in Britain,” one protester, Beth, told Socialist Worker.

And it’s complete unluck for others to live in countries where there’s war and hardship.”

“There’s no right for me or anyone else to stop people from living here.”

**Nick Clark**



HUNDREDS OF people joined a Stand Up to Racism protest in defence of refugees in central London last Saturday PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

# Borders kill, say campaigners

SOME 250 people attended a candle-lit vigil in Hastings on Thursday evening. It took place next to the beach that refugees are brought to by the local lifeboat when rescued at sea.

Simon Hester reported, “Activists from Hastings Supports Refugees, Hastings Community of Sanctuary and Hastings Stand Up To Racism were expecting just such a tragedy like the one this week.

“Living by the sea is a daily reminder of the perils facing small boats.”

The vigil heard speeches from a member of the beach response team, which welcomes refugees when they arrive. A Hastings Rally for Refugees is planned for Saturday 11 December.

On the same evening, 80 people came out in Glasgow.

Around 100 people gathered in Leeds on Friday evening and there were 60 in Swansea.

Up to 50 protested in Oxford, including two Labour councillors and a group of Oxford university

students. There were also 50 at the Chesterfield protest.

On Saturday, over 100 people joined a protest in Brighton, 50 people gathered in Bristol, 80 in Nottingham, 35 in Coventry, 50 in Colchester and 25 in Norwich. There were also protests in Bournemouth, Bangor and Leicester.

## Solidarity

There were 100 on the protest in Lancaster. Audrey Glover reported, “Speeches included one from a ten-year-old Sudanese boy whose mother organised a solidarity protest with the revolution in Sudan.”

Hundreds also joined the Scottish TUC union federation annual anti-racist march on Saturday in Glasgow.

Around 70 people joined the Stand Up to Racism protest in Edinburgh on Sunday. Banners included messages such as “Borders Kill”, “Justice for Climate Migrants” and “Refugees welcome”.

## Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

# THE TORIES ARE IN CHAOS —KICK THEM OUT NOW

**B**ORIS JOHNSON and the Tories are facing a political crisis. Every day seems to bring a new calamity. Broken promises on social care, hiding MPs’ corruption and the scandal of refugees dying trying to cross to Britain have all featured recently.

No wonder support for Johnson has fallen to its lowest level since the 2019 election.

Just 24 percent of people have a favourable attitude towards him. While a YouGov poll showed that 64 percent believe Johnson is doing badly.

Johnson is also facing a revolt from within his party. Tory MPs have hit out at new Covid facemask rules and what they consider, not harsh enough border laws.

The more pressure the Tories face, the more they seek to divert anger towards scapegoats—often refugees, migrants and other oppressed groups.

In an attempt to present refugees as the enemy, home secretary Priti Patel lied to the Justice and Home Affairs Committee.

She said that the majority of people crossing the Channel aren’t refugees. Patel also lied when she ignored refugees’ pleas for

better living conditions saying the uninhabitable Napier Barracks in Kent is “suitable accommodation”.

These attempts to protect Tory necks can have terrible consequences. Last week 27 desperate people drowned in the Channel whilst attempting to reach Britain’s south coast.

Around the same time, Tories recommended sending refugees to be held on the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic. They also talked of using wave machines to capsize boats in the Channel.

Tory MP Scott Benton called on the government to scrap the Human Rights Act to tackle migrant crossings.

Where was the Labour Party when these despicable plans were being outlined? Keir Starmer



## The Tories wanted wave machines to capsize boats

could only muster that he was “frustrated” by the deaths of those crossing the Channel.

It’s yet another sign that Labour won’t show any real opposition to the Tories’ killer policies.

The party is yet to oppose attacks on refugees in the new Nationality and Border Bill.

In a bid for “respectability” Starmer has refused to offer even the mildest solutions to stop refugees drowning in the Channel.

Now the Tories are seeking to shift the blame for their Covid failures, which have so far killed over 145,000 people in Britain, and now look set to threaten many more unnecessary deaths.

They will insist that it’s everyone’s personal responsibility to stop the spread of the virus, but won’t support even moderate protective measures.

They are also punishing the unvaccinated by threatening their jobs, whilst ignoring the failures of the vaccine rollout—and their terrible test and trace system.

With winter setting in and the new Covid variant gaining pace, we need real solutions.

That starts with kicking out the inept, racist and nasty Tories.

# STARMER OUSTS LEFT COMPLETELY

**I**N THE same week that Keir Starmer filled his top team of MPs with right wingers, he demanded that Jeremy Corbyn apologise for ever daring to raise a voice against him.

This is the state of the Labour Party now.

In a shadow cabinet reshuffle on Monday, Starmer cleared out the last few MPs who had even the slightest sympathies with the left.

He gave high profile jobs to established right wingers such as Yvette Cooper, David Lammy and

Wes Streeting. It’s another sign of the right’s dominance in Labour.

Just over a year ago, Starmer suspended Corbyn and removed him as a Labour MP.

Corbyn had said—correctly—that the scale of antisemitism inside Labour was overstated by people who wanted to use it as a weapon against him.

Leading left wing MPs such as John McDonnell promised a fightback. Labour members

risks expulsion and smears for standing up for Corbyn in party

meetings. But left MPs shied away from rebelling against Starmer or resigning in solidarity with Corbyn and their supporters. Instead, they appealed for unity to the leadership that wanted to crush them.

Now Corbyn’s only route back into the Labour Party is to apologise, Labour’s leadership is filled with the right, and left wing members are under the cosh.

That’s where a commitment to staying inside Labour has led. It’s time to leave.





## ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



# Why a top banker said sorry to China

**IT'S NOT often that Jamie Dimon gets humbled. He's chief executive of the giant investment bank JPMorgan Chase—the biggest bank in the United States.**

JPMorgan's roots go deep in the history of US capitalism. John Pierpont Morgan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries marshalled the creation of industrial giants such as US Steel. He orchestrated the rescue of the US financial system from the crisis of 1907. JP Morgan partner Thomas Lamont was a major international power broker when the European states became dependent on US loans during and after the First World War.

Dimon doesn't wield the same kind of political influence, although he steered the bank through the global financial crisis of 2007-8. Since then JPMorgan Chase—the product of multiple bank mergers—has done significantly better than Goldman Sachs, the other historical giant of Wall Street.

But last week Dimon slipped. He told a business forum in Boston, "I made a joke the other day that the Communist Party [of China] is celebrating its 100th year. So is JPMorgan. I'll make a bet that we last longer. I can't say that in China. They are probably listening anyway."

The next day Dimon, who had just been the first Wall Street boss to visit Hong Kong since the onset of the pandemic, twice abjectly apologised. This points to one of the striking things about the growing antagonism between China and the US.

Despite the geopolitical tensions between the two biggest economies in the world, Wall Street is desperate to get more access to Chinese markets.

Financial Times columnist Rana Foroohar asked recently, "Am I the only one amazed by the juxtaposition of China testing hypersonic weapons and Nato's new mission to fend off the Middle Kingdom, with Goldman Sachs joining JPMorgan as the second independent bank to be allowed to operate freely in China without a local partner?"

## Mammoth

These mammoth banks have their eyes fixed on the wealth generated by China's generation-long boom. Goldman's estimates that Chinese households will have £52 trillion of assets by 2030. Global output is about £63 trillion.

Several big Western banks, with JPMorgan and Goldman in the lead, are eager to offer Chinese capitalists their wealth management services and expertise in mergers and acquisitions. But the path to mega-profits is proving rocky. Of the seven global banks with investment banking operations in the People's Republic of China, only three have made a profit in the past three years.

The Chinese market is indeed huge. But there are already well-entrenched domestic banks and outsiders find it hard to understand the rules of the local game. JPMorgan and its ilk hoped they could make up for these disadvantages by helping Chinese companies list their shares outside mainland China.

Yet in July the Chinese government started clamping down on these foreign share launches.

This was partly a reaction to the demand by US securities regulators that Chinese companies listing on Wall Street supply the results of their audits.

China passed a Data Security Law requiring its companies to get government approval before supplying any information to foreign state agencies.

It dramatized the shift by wrecking the Wall Street launch of Didi, the Chinese equivalent of Uber. This followed Chinese regulators blocking an ever bigger share launch by the tech giant Alibaba in November 2020.

The Chinese government also worries about losing political control over private capital. Alibaba boss Jack Ma was getting too big for his boots. In a major speech in October 2020 he attacked China's state banks for their "pawnshop mentality".

So, on the one hand, the internationalisation of capital has dominated the past few decades. Chinese companies are going global and banks like JPMorgan and Goldman Sachs are eager to help them.

On the other hand, the growing antagonism between the US and China is leading both states more tightly to monitor and control the interactions between their economies.

No wonder then that even the mighty Jamie Dimon was scared of offending the Communist Party.

RMT UNION members at London Underground on the picket line last Friday

# London Underground workers fighting for a safe Night Tube

by SAM ORD

**WORKERS ON sections of the London Underground were set to strike on Friday and Saturday of this week. It follows a wider strike against forced night and weekend working on the Night Tube.**

The RMT union members' action last week on five Tube lines had a huge impact across the capital on one of the busiest shopping days of the year, Black Friday.

Many Aslef drivers' union members—who aren't officially on strike—refused to cross picket lines causing severe delays on other parts of the network.

The dispute boils down to who will drive the Night Tube trains. The 24-hour weekend services, suspended during the pandemic, are set to return to the Victoria, Central, Jubilee, Northern and Piccadilly lines.

Bosses want all drivers on the London Underground to work weekend and night shifts, on top of day shifts. They had previously promised to recruit a workforce specifically to run Night Tube services.

Des Rice, an RMT health and safety rep, joined the picket line at Brixton station in south London.

"The company has said there have been no job losses," he told Socialist Worker. "But by amalgamating the Night Tube into the main rosters there are 200 positions that

aren't there anymore.

"So they've twisted it. This is a cut.

"At Brixton now on a 90-week rota there are just 17 Saturday rest days. Family-friendly policies have gone out of the window."

The bosses claim that workers will only have to work four night shifts a year.

But driver Peter told Socialist Worker he expects rota changes to cause around "20 percent extra weekend shifts". "The network has been financially hit, but management uses that as a reason to attack us," he said.

"They call us 'our people' to justify their plans, but that's bullshit. Management has been given a £12 million

bonus to get cuts through."

Workers are determined to continue striking until management reverses its plans to abolish the Night Tube driver grade.

All five lines will strike again on 18 December. Workers on the Central and Victoria lines plan to walk out from 8.30pm to 4.30am on 3, 4, 10, 11 and 17 December.

Peter says workers are angry after "senior management sat at home while we risked our lives".

Des agreed. "Management is hiding behind the pandemic, taking it out on people who have worked through it," he added.

"I hope the strike will focus their minds. We also call on the mayor to stand up to the government over funding."

Disgracefully Labour Mayor of London Sadiq Khan attacked the strikers. He claimed the strikes were "unnecessary" and "causing widespread disruption for millions of Londoners".

He should be blaming TfL bosses and standing on the picket lines.

Every trade unionist and campaigner should build solidarity for the tube workers' strikes.

Solidarity messages can be tweeted to [@RMTLondon](https://twitter.com/RMTLondon) For full details of strike dates visit [bit.ly/317xVvk](https://bit.ly/317xVvk)

## Strikes aren't what endangers women

**THE NIGHT Tube was rightly reinstated after pressure from below following a rise in attacks on women in London and across Britain.**

As well as accusing the strikes of "hitting London's retail, culture and hospitality at the worst possible time", mayor Sadiq Khan implied the strikes will endanger women.

He tweeted that the Night Tube "helps

to improve safety for everyone, especially women and girls making their way home at night".

But the strikers are not opposed to the Night Tube—they want to fight for a safe system with proper staffing.

The Unite union general secretary, Sharon Graham, said Khan's stance was "precisely why workers are turning away from Labour when a Labour mayor attacks workers".



**Got a story?**

Email ideas to [reports@socialistworker.co.uk](mailto:reports@socialistworker.co.uk)

# Police bill adds more repressive measures

**THE TORIES are bringing new amendments to their already very repressive police bill that will outlaw huge swathes of protest.**

Amendment 319A says it is an offence for someone “to attach themselves to another person, an object, or land, attach someone else to another person, an object, or land or attach an object to another object or to land.”

The offence takes place if such action causes—or is capable of causing—“serious disruption”—to two or more people or to an organisation in a public place.

It’s patently targeted at the sort of “lock-on” protests carried out by Extinction Rebellion, the Insulate Britain road actions and campaigners against HS2.

Some lawyers have suggested it might mean linking arms at a protest could be illegal.

Amendment 319B makes “going equipped” for locking-on an offence. Carrying anything that might be used in the offence above is illegal if you are at a protest or near one. The penalty is an unlimited fine.

Amendment 319C ramps up the penalty for wilful obstruction of the highway. Presently it’s a fine. If this goes through it will be up to 51 weeks in prison, a fine or both. Again this is directly against Insulate Britain.

## Pickets

But it could easily be used against demonstrators who sit in the road or pickets who block the entrance to a workplace.

Amendment 319D criminalises obstruction of major transport works. Again HS2 is the obvious example, but it could also cover picketing.

Amendment 319E extends stop and search powers.

Officers could stop and search a person or vehicle if they reasonably suspect they’ll find an item intended for use in connection with wilful obstruction of the highway. Or an item intentionally or recklessly causing public nuisance, locking on, or obstruction of major transport works.

Objects that could be “made, adapted, or intended for use in the course of or in connection with” the listed offences could include

## BACK STORY

**The initial police bill gives police more powers to silence and arrest protesters, harass and jail black people and Muslims and criminalise Gypsies and Travellers**

● Now the Tories have added new amendments before the bill passes to make it much worse

● But Labour and the unions are offering only the most token protests against these amendments that represent fundamental assaults on protest rights

placards, leaflets and banners. The police can seize any prohibited item—and can, therefore, derail a protest before it even gets going.

Amendment 319F brings in stop and search without the need for reasonable suspicion. A police officer—of the rank of inspector or above—can authorise cops to stop and search a vehicle of person without suspicion in a particular place.

It could be used against any demonstration.

Amendment 319K brings in a measure similar to antisocial behaviour orders (Asbos)—but specifically for protesters.

Serious Disruption Prevention Orders (SDPOs) can be imposed on people who have taken part in two or more protests in a five-year period. They can be imposed either after conviction for an offence—or not.

## Internet

People given an SDPO will be subject to a set of conditions. They include not associating with certain people, not going to certain places, not carrying certain items, not using the internet in a certain way.

Breaching the order can lead to 51 weeks in prison.

Everyone has to show solidarity with the immediate targets—even if they question some of their methods on protests.

If there’s no backing for direct action climate activists when they are under the cosh, it will be far harder to defend other rights.

Everyone has to make the police bill unworkable through protests.

For full details of the new amendments go to [bit.ly/police-bill-new](https://bit.ly/police-bill-new)

**AN EXTINCTION Rebellion activist blocks an Amazon warehouse near Bristol**

## Extinction Rebellion blockades Amazon over ‘exploitation of planet’

by **SOPHIE SQUIRE**

EXTINCTION REBELLION blocked Amazon distribution centres on “Black Friday”—a day of sales and big profits for the business.

The group occupied Amazon sites across Britain, in Germany and in the Netherlands in protest at its “exploitative and environmentally destructive business practices”.

Police in Britain arrested at least 31 people involved in the protests.

Rosie, a student supporter of Extinction Rebellion (XR), spoke to

Socialist Worker from the blockade at the company’s distribution centre in Doncaster in South Yorkshire. She said Amazon is exploiting “people and planet”.

She said activists arrived at the depot at 4am, with rebels locking onto concrete blocks and erecting a bamboo structure at one entrance.

The group blocked the entrances that HGV lorries use to travel in and out of the centre, effectively halting distribution.

“I started taking part in direct action like this two years ago,” said Rosie. “I was very frustrated with our political system and how

it continues to function while we destroy the planet. I felt like direct action was better than sitting at home, maybe signing a petition occasionally.”

She added, “We are targeting Amazon because it symbolises everything wrong with the system. It symbolises everything exploitative and destructive.

“Jeff Bezos can go to space, but he can’t pay his workers properly.”

Bezos has promised that Amazon will be carbon neutral by 2040, but the company continues to pump our emissions on a massive scale. Amazon contributed 51.17 million metric tonnes of CO2 to the atmosphere, it was revealed last year. It produced more emissions than Hong Kong, Denmark and Switzerland.

And it is also one of the companies that lobbied against new US climate legislation.

Rosie added that XR members were also out in solidarity with the GMB union and others who have organised the “Make Amazon Pay” campaign.

Protests came after the GMB revealed that ambulance call-outs to Amazon distribution centres go up 50 percent on Black Friday.

**Police arrested more than 30 protesters against Amazon last week**



# US sanctions starve over 24 million Afghans

Both the aftermath of military occupation and imperialist power plays are starving a majority of Afghans, reports Nick Clark

**TENS OF millions of people in Afghanistan face famine as international economic sanctions on the government—led by the US—bite.**

The crisis is both a legacy of two decades of war and Western military occupation and the West's punishment of Afghanistan's new Taliban government.

The United Nations World Food Programme has said that almost 24 million people in Afghanistan—some 60 percent of the population—suffer acute hunger. And nearly nine million people are close to starvation.

It expects that more than 3 million children under the age of five will suffer acute malnutrition by the end of the year.

Some Western NGOs and media reports pin at least part of the blame on the Taliban government, which took control in August this year.

The reactionary government has placed bans and restrictions on the ability of women to work.

Women are now only allowed to work in certain sectors such as education.

They also need a male family member to escort them to and from work. That's not always possible for people whose male family members have been killed, forced to flee or are otherwise absent.

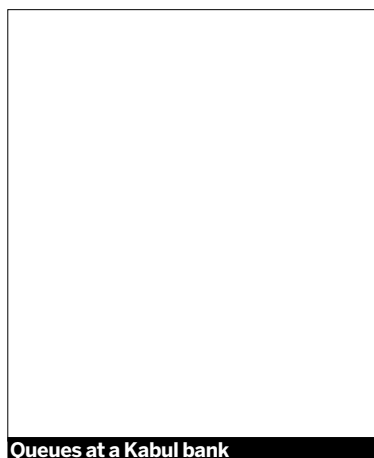
But the main cause of hunger is the economic sanctions on the Taliban enforced by the US.

The West's invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in 2001 installed a corrupt, puppet government dependent on US dollars, international aid and NGOs.

Even before the Taliban took over, Afghanistan's Western-backed government was failing to pay the salaries of public sector workers.

Hatred of the occupation and the government among ordinary people allowed the Taliban to overthrow the government and force the US out.

The Taliban had spent two decades organising armed resistance to the occupation among



Queues at a Kabul bank

the rural poor. Now the US and other governments are punishing the Taliban with economic isolation, using concerns about human rights as an excuse.

Western countries have cut off the direct financial payments to Afghanistan that funded three quarters of the previous government's budget. The US also froze £7.2 billion of Afghanistan's central bank assets held abroad in US dollars.

It left the Taliban government with just 0.2 percent of Afghanistan's international currency reserves.

The Taliban responded by limiting ordinary people's cash withdrawals to just £150 a week as food prices soared.

Jean Martin-Bauer of the World Food Programme said, "Afghanistan is all of a sudden cut off from the rest of the world, in financial terms. Of course that's going to have severe impacts on people."

"If you have no work, your entire family relies on you, you can't access your savings and food prices are rising, that's really painful."

The hunger in Afghanistan isn't caused by some natural disaster, or exclusively the Taliban.

It's because the US is desperate to impose its control on the Middle East—and will starve ordinary people to do it.



AN AFGHAN girl in Khost province, east Afghanistan

PICTURE:STR/XINHUA/ALAMY LIVE NEWS

## GERMANY

# Greens abandon any climate radicalism

GERMANY IS set to have a new government in place before the end of the year. But hopes of a radical Green shift on climate change look to have been dashed.

The announcement last week of a coalition deal between the Labour-like SPD, the Green Party and the pro-business FDP party is a cause for celebration among "centrists".

It's a deal creating political and

pro-business economic stability they say.

But for the Greens, the deal is causing a political crisis. The party's vote was swelled by demands for radical climate action.

But in its bid for power, the party has retreated. Not only is the coalition commitment to end the use of coal in Germany by 2030 prefixed by the word "ideally", but the party allowed the FDP

to control crucial finance and transport ministry.

Many Green supporters wanted a radical agenda, with restrictions on emissions. Millions of SPD voters too wanted change, especially on rights at work.

But the new coalition offers little on those fronts. For now the governing coalition looks stable, but that may change when the Green's compromises become reality.

## GADELOUPE, MARTINIQUE, POLYNESIA

# Revolt spreads across French 'overseas territories'

**REVOLTS THAT swept the French "overseas territories" of Guadeloupe and Martinique in the Caribbean have now spread to French Polynesia in the South Pacific.**

Several Polynesian trade union federations began a strike last week in the public and private sectors.

Workers are demanding pay rises and an end to mandatory vaccinations.

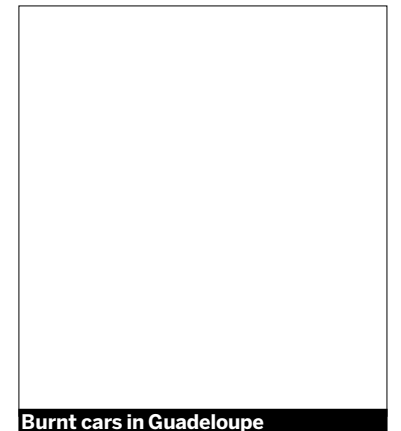
Meanwhile the French government has postponed implementing a Covid-19 vaccination mandate for

health workers in Martinique and Guadeloupe. This follows explosive protests that included road blockades and strikes.

Those who refused jabs were given unpaid leave. More time will now be given for individual "dialogue" with their managers while still getting paid.

The concessions are a reaction to riots that intensified.

"Last night in Martinique was clearly more intense than the nights before," a local spokesperson for the French state said last Friday.



Burnt cars in Guadeloupe



## Remember our strike

IT'S TEN years since more than two million public sector workers all struck together over an attack on pensions by the government then led by David Cameron.

It feels like such a different time. The year began with the student revolt, and saw huge demonstrations against austerity. There really was a sense that our strikes could beat the government.

Instead, leaders of major trade unions quickly accepted a repackaged version of the same attack.

The 30 November strike was the high point—we never got back to that scale of resistance again.

Now there are a new public sector fights brewing over pay in the NHS and local government.

It would be good to win that level of united action again—and not let union leaders sell us all out.

Lucy Holland  
Carlisle

## Legacy of rule for rich

SINCE Margaret Thatcher, the Tory Party has been on a mission to shrink the state. Privatisation has been the name of the game.

Now, cuts to welfare and a national insurance increase will punish a population that is still reeling from the pandemic.

The free market agenda has meant austerity for the poor and giant handouts, for the rich. As the Tories champion business, people may well ask how business will help them.

Karen Burns  
By Email

## Another tale of racism from cricket's past

I ENJOYED your article on cricket's history, rooted in imperialism (Cricket—born from racism and imperialism, SW online).

Racism has been in cricket for years. Why was Basil D'Oliveira not originally selected for the tour to South Africa in 1968?

Most selectors—Gubby Allen, Freddie Brown, SC Griffith, Peter May—had connections to the apartheid regime in South



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

# We're organising to stop the right exploiting Covid anger

IN AUSTRIA and elsewhere, the far right is using the anger and frustration many people feel against new Covid restrictions to increase its influence.

Those who run small businesses are particularly vulnerable to this threat.

In Swansea the owner of a small independent cinema, who has struggled to keep her business afloat, received a closure notice from the council.

This was after she allegedly failed to comply with several regulations, including requiring Covid passes.

The far right sect Voice of Wales—thrown off YouTube for racism and Islamophobia—is using the situation to promote the

cinema on social media. In addition a crowdfunder set up by a former Brexit Party and Abolish the Welsh Assembly candidate has raised over £60,000 so far in support.

Swansea Stand Up To Racism immediately put out an open letter.

It was signed within 24 hours by over 200 musicians, performers, poets and activists who have used the cinema for many years as a venue.

The letter calls on the owner to unambiguously tell her far right supporters they are not welcome—something which many feel she has not yet done.

Stand Up To Racism's intervention was crucial. Many people are opposed to Covid

passports. But with far right groups hijacking the issue, many previous and current users of the cinema were confused as to the correct position to take.

Our local Stand Up To Racism group exposed the racist politics of those who were exploiting the situation.

It made clear that the main issue was not Covid passports but the attempts of the far right to muscle in.

This unholy alliance of the far right and the anti-vaccination groups is a real danger.

It must be confronted in order to keep racists on the fringes of British politics.

Tim Evans  
Swansea

## Cops show state wants to crush protest

THE CRACKDOWN on Insulate Britain is an assault on civil liberties by the police, the government and the courts.

Essex police has issued an appeal to drivers who were "significantly inconvenienced" by the road occupations on the M11 and M25.

This is an example of the police acting in a partisan manner in order to secure stiffer sentences.

All sorts of groups such as fox hunters, or the recent fuel protest by farmers

caused similar inconvenience to drivers and break the law. But I have yet to see the police issue similar appeals.

The state's objective is to break Insulate Britain not uphold the law—which it frequently ignores.

John Sinha  
North London

Just a thought...

## A ham-fisted headline?

YOUR FRONT page headline last week was very nasty towards pigs (Dump this pig, 24 November).

Please don't associate Boris Johnson with pigs—he makes them look very smart by comparison.

Anthony Wright  
On Facebook

●WHAT IF we do dump Boris Johnson?

Then who do we get next? Priti Patel or Dominic Raab?

Tony Speck  
On Facebook

●I SAY we leave the pig where he is. With any luck the voters will get all the vermin out.

Allan Williams  
On Facebook

## Priorities of a sick society

THE GOVERNMENT and its supporters often say there's no money or space to house refugees.

But helping refugees might be a better way to spend, say, the £37 billion "spaffed up the wall" on Serco's failed test and trace system.

I once walked along Embankment in central London on a sunny Saturday. Every balcony on the blocks of flats across the river was empty, because they'd been bought as investments, not homes.

Meanwhile refugees are housed in hovels, forced to live on just £5 a day.

Declan Maguire  
On Facebook

●PRITI PATEL really does have blood on her hands after last week's migrant deaths in the Channel.

She is a soundbite politician, devoid of sympathy and utterly incompetent.

Tones  
On Twitter

## Time to scrap student debt

A FREEDOM of information request last week revealed that one person owes nearly £200,000 in student loans.

Many other graduates came forward about their own debts of tens of thousands.

Time to scrap fees, loans and debts.

Lisa Muir  
Penrith

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN



# SUDANESE ACTIVISTS SPEAK OUT TO SOCIALIST WORKER

# ‘THIS REVOLUTION IS COMING FROM THE PEOPLE’

Sudanese activists spoke to Charlie Kimber about the resistance to the military coup, the arguments following a “compromise” deal last week, and their hopes about the way forward to victory against a ruthless enemy

**THE SELL-OUT deal last week between the military and prime minister Abdalla Hamdok could have derailed the mass movement that has been fighting for democracy and social justice in Sudan.**

But the great majority of those who have taken to the street since the coup on 25 October have denounced the agreement and are continuing to mobilise. Sudanese activist Mohamed thinks the military have won themselves a breathing space through the deal. “I am very angry with Hamdok,” he says. “For nearly a month people went on to the streets to demand his freedom from arrest and his restoration to the post of prime minister. “People gave their blood, their lives for this. But instead of being together with that mass movement, he went behind their backs and come to an agreement with the man who led the coup, General Abdel al-Burhan. This is a whitewash. It is a betrayal. “The correct position is, ‘No negotiation, no partnership and no legitimacy for the putschists’. “This is a popular message in Sudan. When the deal was announced I was

fearful that groups like the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC), which is full of people who want compromises, might support it. “But they sensed that if they did so, they would no longer have support. They would be swept away. “Some of the FFC still want to do a deal, and a section of its leaders met Hamdok last week. More traitors! “Hamdok made a big announcement that he had ordered the Sudanese police not to attack the marches on Thursday last week. What happened? The police fired tear gas at protesters in Omdurman, North Kordofan and North Darfur.

“**The military have the guns, tear gas and equipment to help put down the demonstrations**

“Hamdok said that protest was the right of the people. And the police just ignore him.” Many in the movement are realistic about the enemy they face. Activist Hatim says, “I expect the government will ceaselessly carry on the violence as the only available measures given their desperation and the fact that they are essentially composed of militias.”

**Horrific** Moussa agrees, “If the military are in charge we know it will be a very cruel regime. The number of demonstrators, peaceful demonstrators, who have been killed is horrific.” Enas added, “Burhan has no principles. We should recognise that this will be a difficult struggle. The military have their hands on the money. Last year the government said 80 percent of the country’s public resources were “outside the finance ministry’s control”—that’s the military’s share. “And the military also have the guns and the tear gas and all the equipment to put down demonstrations.” Zeinab’s family comes from Darfur, the region which has faced the harshest repression for many years. “Attacks on Darfuris by the central government and

## TIMELINE

- **December 2018** Revolt begins against Sudanese dictator Omar al-Bashir.
- **April 2019** Fearing the scale of protests, the military announces Bashir has been removed.
- **August 2019** But the military stay in charge. Mass protests continue and in May workers hold a general strike. Sudan seems on the brink of revolution
- **25 October 2021** Transitional agreement says the military should step aside, but they launch a coup. People respond with marches, strikes and street barricades
- **21 November 2021** Deposed prime minister Abdalla Hamdok does a deal with the military leaders, but this agreement is rejected on the streets



(above and below) Protests on the streets of Sudanese cities have defied the military and strengthened the revolution

its militias have been going on for 18 years,” she said. “In the last two years, because they feared they would lose control after al-Bashir was forced out, the murderous Rapid Support Forces (RSF) increased their attacks in some areas. “And then after the coup it was like a switch had been turned again. Last week the RSF and its allies burnt 28 villages, they raped children and women. This is not a regime you can do deals with. “Our only hope is the development of the revolution. Last week on the demonstration in Khartoum I saw people chanting ‘We are all Darfur’. “That is so important because it is the movement overcoming the divides pushed from the regime.”

**Spearheading** Despite the bloodshed, activists have a profound belief in the possibility of victory. Hatim says, “The socialists in Sudan have been and still are spearheading the revolution.” He believes, “The Sudan Communist Party (SCP) refused right from the outset to participate in the transitional government which was a civilian and military partnership.



“The SCP predicted that the military council was not loyal to the revolution’s ideals. The military is serving the former regime on one side, and the capitalist interests of countries such as Egypt and United Arab Emirates on the other. “The task remains to topple the coup’s government and establish a complete civilian transitional rule with no negotiations or concessions to the military. “The revolution is stronger and more united than before and we count on our

peaceful struggle to restore what we lost.” Enas adds, “It has been so inspiring to see the extraordinary level of resistance, unarmed people facing live ammunition. This is in contrast to the attitude of what’s called the international community. I think the lack of international pressure on Burhan was the single biggest factor why the coup did not fail immediately. “But the people will continue to fight for democratic government.” The test now is turning the courage and determination of protesters into effective action. Last Thursday saw tens of thousands on the streets again, rejecting in practice the deal and insisting that resistance was the way forward. But at present there seem to be fewer strikes than in 2019 when workers’ stoppages and a big general strike were crucial to forcing back the military, at least temporarily. The combination of strikes and the coordination of the resistance committees could create an alternative power to Hamdok and Burhan and point towards a real revolution that uses Sudan’s wealth for workers and the poor. Some personal details of these activists have been left out to prevent identification

## COMMITTEES

**EXTRACTS from a message from Khartoum State Resistance Committees, 22 November 2021**

‘WHOMSOEVER had faith in Hamdok, that faith must die. But those who have faith in the revolution, the revolution is alive and well! We hereby declare that the agreement that has been reached by The Coup Military Council and the former PM Hamdok, does not concern us. We continue to adhere by our firm position whereby there will be no negotiation. The unified position of the committees is “Just Fall” —a call for the reigning illegitimate powers to concede their hold on our country. We call on all the revolutionaries and the peoples of Sudan to stand in formation on the streets the goals of the revolution are fully achieved.’

# ‘Our weapon was street protests, but also strikes’

DOCTOR REEM took part in the early phases of the Sudanese revolution in and has watched the developments since. “I was working in a military hospital in Khartoum in December 2018,” she says. “As the revolt against Omar al-Bashir began, one of the central forces was the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA) which organised people such as lawyers and doctors. “Our weapon was street protests but also strikes. In general, doctors struck except for emergency services. But as I was in a military hospital we closed everything. “On the ground we provided care for protesters. At the end of that month I smelled the tear gas for the first time. And then I saw the injuries go from the wounds caused by rubber bullets to the injuries and deaths caused by live ammunition. “It was around this time I was arrested when the militias attacked a small mobile clinic set up in a school. They bombarded it with tear gas—it was a tiny space with no ventilation. “When I fled from the gas they grabbed me and threw me in a truck. I was beaten and whipped. We were taken to a room, about 65 women together, where they said we would be raped. “The army were even more brutal to women than men because women were such an important part of the fight, as they are now. I was released, but others were taken to the Shendi centre where they were tortured with electric shocks and other methods. “One thing we all learnt in the process of the revolution was about the crimes in Darfur. We had never really known of this in Khartoum. Now it became clear to us the horror of what had occurred.

**Dominant** “There is a big difference between 2018 and 2019 and what is happening now. Back then it was the SPA and the FFC that were dominant. This time it is the civil resilience committees and the disobedience committees that are the main force. “The revolution is coming from the people themselves. “The committees I know have two main functions at the moment. The first is to organise protests. They not only call people on to the streets at synchronised times, but also arrange protection for when the attacks come. They set up shelter to



Sudanese army in Darfur

go to when the military launch their assaults and provide mobile clinics. “This is carefully organised, with people going on the protests with collapsible stretchers on their backs, ready for what they know will come. “The second function is meetings and talks, a big educational process and discussion to maintain unity against the divide and rule tactics of the regime.

**Agreement** “The Hamdok-Burhan deal has caused division. Some people say that Hamdok had no choice. “Many others, and I am one of them, say you cannot shake hands with a killer. But we must not forget that our power is in our unity. Whichever side this agreement has put you on, in the end we must not let them divide us and continue to stand as one in the streets “This time I think we are stronger because we are not relying on anybody except the people organising from below. “So this movement has no colour, no alliance to any political party or power. It is people on the street fighting for justice for their brothers and sisters who died on the field with them “The political parties, including the SCP bickered and quarrelled during the period of the transitional government, neglecting the interests of the people and that gave the military a wedge to use to sustain themselves. “The regime is not frightened of them, it is the committees they fear. Look at the detainees who are being released. The ones they hold longest are the people who organise the committees. “In its way this is a compliment to their strength. This is where hope lies.

### Four things you can do...

**1. Send a message from your trade union or campaign group to the Coordination of Resistance Committees in Khartoum** [resistancecommittee.com/en/contact-us/](https://resistancecommittee.com/en/contact-us/)

**2. Send a message to the trade unions in Sudan via** [foreignrelations@sudaneseprofessionals.org](mailto:foreignrelations@sudaneseprofessionals.org) or **tweet**

**AssociationSd or facebook.com/SdnProAssociation**

**3. Join the emergency conference Solidarity with the Sudanese Revolution. Monday 6 December. Details at** [bit.ly/Sudan612](https://bit.ly/Sudan612)

**4. Join solidarity protests in Britain. Your local SWP branch will know when these are.**



## WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

### INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

### THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

### INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism.

In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We oppose discrimination against disabled people including those who experience mental distress.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) or phone 020 7840 5602

# Socialist Workers Party online meetings



## Patterns of revolution What can we learn from Sudan?

**CAMBRIDGE**  
Thu 9 Dec, 7.30pm  
681-800-4408

**LONDON: HARINGEY**  
Wed 8 Dec, 7.30pm  
459-388-1576

**NORWICH**  
Thurs 9 Dec, 7.30pm  
906-652-5299

**PORTSMOUTH**  
Wed 8 Dec, 7.30pm  
Somerstown Central Community Hub,  
Southsea,  
PO5 4EY

**WIGAN**  
Thu 9 Dec, 7pm  
Book-Cycle  
Buckley St W  
WN6 7PQ



The Socialist Workers Party continues to hold mostly online meetings during the pandemic. This ensures that there can still be collective and safe discussion, organising and actions. Occasionally branches will hold in-person meetings with precautions taken for a safe environment.

Most of the meetings will be held using the Zoom system. Download the Zoom app onto your phone or computer and just before the time given for your local meeting ask to "Join a meeting".

You can then enter the number printed on this page for the appropriate meeting. **The password for all meetings is 967537.**

Make sure you look at the SWP Facebook page [facebook.com/SocialistWorkersParty](https://facebook.com/SocialistWorkersParty) for news of national online meetings and other updates.

**BRIGHTON & HOVE**  
The world turned upside down — the English Revolution  
Thu 9 Dec, 6.30pm  
874-3262-3749

**BURNLEY & PENDLE**  
Anger to revolution — why do people rise up?  
Wed 15 Dec, 7.30pm  
446-409-5118

**CARDIFF**  
Does Lenin matter today?  
Wed 15 Dec, 7.30pm  
630-181-4857

**CHESTERFIELD**  
The revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx  
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## { MOVEMENT EVENTS }

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# The hero who took revenge for Britain's bloody crime

This epic biopic tells the story of Indian revolutionary Udham Singh—and the massacre that drove him to hit back at the British Empire, writes **Yuri Prasad**

**HINDI FILMS are all about the costumes, the dancing and the hit songs, right? Not this one.**

Sardar Udham is a carefully aimed punch to the stomach of British imperialism. As such, the mood is tense throughout its 2 hours and 49 minutes.

Director Shoojit Sircar's biographical epic tells the story of Udham Singh. He was an Indian revolutionary who witnessed an atrocity so obscene that he spent the rest of his life seeking revenge for it.

Singh (played by Vicky Kaushal) was a teenager in the Punjabi city of Amritsar in 1919 when it rose against British rule.

Thousands of people took to the streets, burnt down buildings associated with the Raj, and killed a number of colonials.

In revenge, Michael O'Dwyer (Shaun Scott), the Lieutenant-Governor of the province, demanded that Punjab be "taught a lesson".

That lesson came in the form of a massacre in a park known as Jallianwala Bagh.

## Curfew

Troops of the British Indian army were ordered to shoot some 1,650 bullets into an unarmed crowd of 15,000 that were defying a curfew order. They killed or badly injured many hundreds.

The experience turned Singh into a revolutionary, and led him to join with other young people that dedicated their lives to fighting for liberation by any means necessary.

As Marxists, they not only wanted freedom from the British—but an India free from the rule of the rich.

The film is told as a series of recollections that come to Singh while in jail in Britain after shooting O'Dwyer dead in London.

As he is being tortured by the police and his jailers, Singh's mind shifts to recollections of his



VICKY KAUSHAL as Udham Singh

revolutionary friends. He remembers how after being jailed for his activities in India, he travelled to Britain in the hope of finding other nationalists and Communists that might help him seek vengeance.

Sardar Udham's complex narrative structure means placing his most crucial recollection—the Amritsar Massacre—at the very end of the film.

That's a daring move for a director, and whether it works is debatable.

A bigger problem is that the scenes of the massacre are almost unbearable to watch.

The slow motion shots of dozens

of individual shootings are both gruesome and ultra-realistic.

Perhaps it was necessary to show us some of them, to lend gravity to the crime. But I found it gratuitous and sickening—and had to cover my eyes.

More appropriately powerful are scenes in which a desperate Singh works through the night after the killing spree to find the living among the dead.

These are the parts of the film that will stay with you—and which ought to haunt all the present day defenders of the British Empire.

## Oscars

Sardar Udham was thought to be a dead cert for the Indian nomination to the Oscars, but some of the judges felt that its overtones were too anti-British.

That's wrong. In a powerful scene Singh is told by one of his British interrogators that he must "really hate" the British.

Singh is clear in his response, saying that he doesn't even hate his torturers, because they are "just doing their job".

Nevertheless, most of the British characters are written in a stiff upper lip way that is typical of many an Indian film.

Perhaps that stereotype is now

so strong that Sircar felt he couldn't deviate from it.

Sardar Udham is an attack on today's empire defenders, and will provide no comfort to prime minister Narendra Modi and his government of right wing thugs.

For years they have tried to appropriate the leftist legends of Udham Singh and Bhagat Singh for their own chauvinist version of Indian history.

But Sircar reminds us that one of Udham Singh's last cries from the dock at the Old Bailey was to declare that his name was "Ram Mohammad Singh Azad."

It was a call for Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs to unite in the fight for liberation.

Sardar Udham is available on Amazon Prime with English subtitles

## READ MORE

**Socialist Worker articles on Udham Singh and the Amritsar Massacre**

● Udham Singh—revolutionary who took revenge for empire  
[bit.ly/udham-singh](https://bit.ly/udham-singh)

● Amritsar—a very British massacre  
[bit.ly/amritsar-british-massacre](https://bit.ly/amritsar-british-massacre)

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## FILM

### SEBERG

On Netflix from Friday  
10 December

AS A bloody battle between Black Power and the US state raged in the late sixties, the movement enlisted some unlikely allies—celebrity actors and sections of the Hollywood elite.

Alongside Marlon Brando, Jane Fonda and Leonard Bernstein was Jean Seberg, a 30-year old star of French New Wave cinema who hailed from small town Iowa.

Seberg was determined to use her fame and her new found wealth to aid those fighting the system. In the early 1960s she



Ipek Bozkurt

financially supported moderate anti-racist groups such as the NAACP, but later backed radicals, including the Black Panther Party.

This film from 2019 concentrates on her political and romantic relationship with Hakim Jamal, a black nationalist leader in the "US" organisation. The FBI set out to destroy them both.

Read Socialist Worker's review online at [bit.ly/sw-seberg](https://bit.ly/sw-seberg)

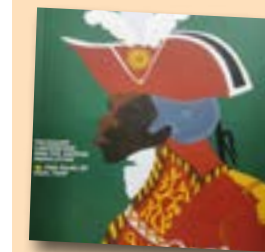
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## Toussaint Louverture and The Haitian Revolution

Christian Hogsbjerg and Margaret Renn discuss Paul Foot's talks on Louverture



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A depiction of the Amritsar massacre



**Author, historian and activist Andreas Malm puts forward radical solutions to the climate crisis.**

In his book *How to Blow up a Pipeline*, Malm makes a case for systematic sabotage of CO2 emitting infrastructure.

His advice to the movement is, “Damage and destroy new CO2-emitting devices. Put them out of commission, pick them apart, demolish them, burn them, blow them up.

“Let the capitalists who keep on investing in the fire know that their properties will be trashed.”

But why isn’t that already happening?

This is the question Malm grapples with for a large section of the book.

Malm took part in direct action with the German climate group Ende Gelände (End of the Road).

The group swarmed coal mines in their thousands to shut them down.

But he notes, especially in the last few years, these kinds of disruptive actions haven’t been common.

And he describes the climate movement as “gentle” compared to other movements against, for example, racism.

In small pockets, climate activists have blocked and disrupted fossil-fuel emitters.

Last week, two young women climbed machinery at the world’s largest coal mine in Port of Newcastle, Australia, effectively shutting down production.

But considering the frequency of extreme weather disasters in 2021 and the utter inaction of world leaders, it seems surprising that this kind of action has been so rare.

**FOR MALM, the answers to why this kind of direct action isn’t popular today are complex.**

One reason he gives is the impact of ideas around non-violence. These are especially popular with the climate movement in the global north.

Extinction Rebellion (XR) is used as a prime example by Malm of the strengths and weaknesses of strict non-violent action.

The theory that underpins XR’s beliefs can be found in Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan’s *Why Civil Resistance Works*.

Chenoweth and Stephen looked at hundreds of struggles for liberation across the world and concluded non-violent tactics are always the most effective.

Malm argues this “peace washed” rewriting of history has been used to make non-violence a condition within sections of the climate movement. He corrects a sanitised version of how change happens and writes, “The first sweeping



ENDE GELANDE activists in Germany occupy fossil fuel infrastructure in 2015

# SHOULD WE DESTROY POLLUTING INFRASTRUCTURE?

Accelerating climate change means we must look to radical solutions within the climate movement. Author Andreas Malm’s radicalism is welcome but cannot replace a mass workers’ movement, argues Sophie Squire



Andreas Malm

emancipation of slaves occurred in the Haitian Revolution—hardly a bloodless affair.

“As some recall, slavery in the US was terminated by a civil war, whose death toll still remains close to the aggregate from all other military conflicts the country has been embroiled in.”

For Malm, the effort to sanitise history is another example of a failing of the current climate movement and a turn



**The climate movement needs to be more radical and more militant**

away from more radical and revolutionary politics.

Throughout his writing, Malm rightly asserts that the climate movement needs to be more radical and more militant, which most socialists would agree with.

His call to diversify tactics to hit the bosses’ profits on every level is a very valid one. He also says that creating a larger movement is important. Malm writes, “In politics numbers are

everything. One worker staying home is a shirker, one thousand are a strike.

“One Greta is a girl in Stockholm, one million girls and boys a force to reckon with.”

Another of Malm’s strengths is he firmly asserts that capitalism provided the conditions for climate disaster

In his earlier book, *Fossil Capital*, Malm goes into depth about how in Britain the switch from water power to fossil fuels was pushed by the bosses’ demand to make a profit and establish control.

He is also sure to point out the capitalist state won’t be prevailed upon to take the action necessary to protect the planet.

**IN HOW to Blow up a Pipeline, he writes, “The ruling class will not be talked into action. They are not amenable to persuasion. The louder the sirens wail, the more material they rush to the fire, so it is evident that change will have to be forced upon them.”**

All of this adds to Malm’s argument of needing disruptive tactics to challenge the capitalist system as it currently stands.

The need to look for practical solutions to save the planet from climate breakdown is important to Malm.

And in his later book *War Communism?* Corona, Climate, Chronic Emergency, Malm grapples with what kind of system is needed to survive on an already damaged planet.

He proposes what he describes as “ecological Leninism” as a transitional and emergency way of organising society.

Malm uses the term *War Communism* in reference to the emergency measures put forward by the Bolshevik party after the Russian revolution of 1917.

Russia had been besieged by invading armies, and wrecked by famine and economic crisis. It needed to nationalise industries swiftly and redistribute food supplies for the revolution to survive.

While not suggesting history should be repeated, Malm says an emergency reorganisation of society is needed to save us from climate catastrophe.

**MALM IS right to say this. The crisis calls for a complete reorganisation of society. But socialists’ vision of what that would look like goes further than Malm suggests.**

In *White Skin, Black Fuel*, which Malm co-wrote, he claims climate change is “a revolutionary problem without a revolutionary subject”.

He later wrote, “We have just argued that the capitalist state is constitutionally incapable of taking these steps. And yet there is no other form of

state on offer. No workers’ state based on soviets will miraculously be born in the night.

“No dual power of the democratic organs of the proletariat seems likely to materialise anytime soon, if ever.

“Waiting for it would be both delusional and criminal, and so all we have to work with is the dreary bourgeois state, tethered to the circuits of capital as always.”

While Malm does mention strikes in *How to Blow up a Pipeline*, they are just one of a set of diverse tactics he proposes.

For all its militancy, Malm baulks at the real challenge we face. A movement that breaks the law will face the fury and repression of the state.

And, as he himself writes, climate destruction is an integral part of capitalism. So the task is not just to protest and pressure but to destroy capitalism and its state.

**THAT IS why the working class, a collective class at the centre of the process of producing profits is so crucial. If it stops then the system itself shakes.**

Turing this potential into a “revolutionary subject” is not simple.

It’s true that workers aren’t currently revolting in their millions for the climate or downing tools on oil rigs or coal mines.

This doesn’t mean that socialists should argue against disruptive tactics in favour of just passing motions in their trade union.

We argue that we must go a step further.

That requires infusing workers’ struggles with an argument about the climate. Simultaneously, and as an essential part of winning the first argument, the workers’ movement has to be far more combative and to take on climate issues.

We say that when they fight and organise and create structures of democratic power workers alone have the power to create a society that puts people and planet before profit.

And the potential for workers’ anger to boil over is everywhere.

Explosions of anger when extreme weather destroys a village, flattens crops or dries up wells are likely to become more frequent as the temperatures

**Ende Gelände activists block a road leading to a German deforestation site last year (top). Amazon workers walk out to demand action on climate change in September, 2019 (bottom)**

soar.

These struggles can become climate struggles that challenge the system itself.

In Iran workers and farmers have taken part in furious protests over water shortages for the last week.

The crisis has been caused by environmental destruction coupled with government incompetence and corruption.

Climate change might not be what is driving most of the protesters, but it is the root cause.

That shows the possibility of going further.

Malm offers important arguments. But ultimately he is not militant enough.



**FOCUS ON ECONOMICS**

## Are increases in workers’ wages to blame for higher inflation?

Rising prices are hitting workers’ living standards. Nick Clark asks what causes inflation

INFLATION CAN leave us feeling pretty helpless. The prices of some of the most everyday things—food, petrol, rent—are going to go up leaving us all essentially poorer.

It’s happening all over the world. There’s nothing we’ve done to cause it, and apparently nothing we can do to stop it happening.

You’d certainly get that impression from the mainstream economists in the newspapers, the leading politicians, and the heads of central banks.

They talk about inflation as if it’s some independent force of nature—something to do with human behaviour, but with a life of its own.

But inflation doesn’t act of its own accord. Capitalist competition drives inflation as rival bosses rush to buy up materials and so push up the price.

They try and make up for this by bumping up the price of the products they produce, which has a knock-on effect on ordinary people.

### Prices

Whenever possible, politicians and economists have tried to pin the blame on workers’ wages. If wages rise too high, they would say, prices rise to catch up.

But that argument doesn’t stick.

Wages have mostly been held down or cut over the past decade as part of austerity—and they are not rising with inflation now.

The free market right tries to blame state spending and intervention.

They argue that if the supply of money rises higher than production, demand will increase more than the supply of goods and services, pulling up prices.

But this argument doesn’t work either.

One of the ways governments reacted to the financial crash in 2008 was to effectively create

### INFLATION MEANS workers suffer

more money and pump it into the financial system.

Inflation stayed low or even negative.

So now most mainstream economists have to admit that the worldwide rise in inflation has something to do with how their system is working. Or rather, how it isn’t.

Some explanations pin at least part of the blame on increased “consumer demand”—ordinary people wanting to buy things.

But they all accept that the disruption and shutdowns during the pandemic are at the root of the problem.

These meant production of certain goods and services, such as building materials and semiconductor chips, fell.

Manufacturing bosses raised their prices to protect their profits, or even to boost them by taking advantage of the reduced supply.

The bosses who buy these materials find that the increased costs eat into their own profits.

So they raise their prices to make up for it. It causes a

knock-on effect, where price rises get passed on right down to the goods that ordinary people buy in the shops.

US president Joe Biden tried to stymie this last week by releasing petrol into the market from a government reserve.

The idea is that the increased supply will force bosses to drive prices down again.

### Crisis

Biden also accused some energy companies of using the crisis as an excuse to charge ordinary more.

All this tells us is that inflation isn’t to about “excessive” wage rises, or too much money in the system.

It’s to do with the behaviour of businesses and bosses in their relentless drive for profit.

They’ll still try to pass the buck onto us, though. The same mainstream economists, politicians and bankers now talk of heading off a “wage-price spiral.”

They mean that, as prices rise, ordinary people might demand more wages. They’re especially worried about this in areas with labour shortages.

Higher wages, they say, will eat into bosses’ profits and force them to raise prices even more.

Their alternative is to protect profits by holding wages down.

We’re not to blame for inflation, and we shouldn’t be made to pay for it. The problem is an unplanned system driven by profit.



**As profits at firms come under pressure, they pass on price rises to others**

### READ MORE

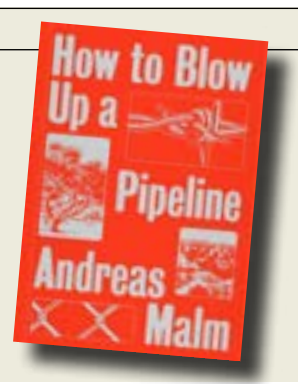
● **How to Blow up a Pipeline: Learning to Fight in a World on Fire** by Andreas Malm £10.99

● **System Change not Climate Change** edited Martin Empson, £8

● **Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam-Power and the Roots of Global Warming** by Andreas Malm £19.99

● **White Skin, Black Fuel: On the Danger of Fossil Fascism** by The Zetkin Collective and Andreas Malm £20

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# Did the US state help to murder Malcolm X?

**TWO MEN convicted of the 1965 assassination of Malcolm X were exonerated last week. Socialist Worker looks at who really wanted the black leader dead, and why.**

AT 3.30PM a doctor at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital entered a side room and announced in a detached manner, "The gentleman you knew as Malcolm X is dead."

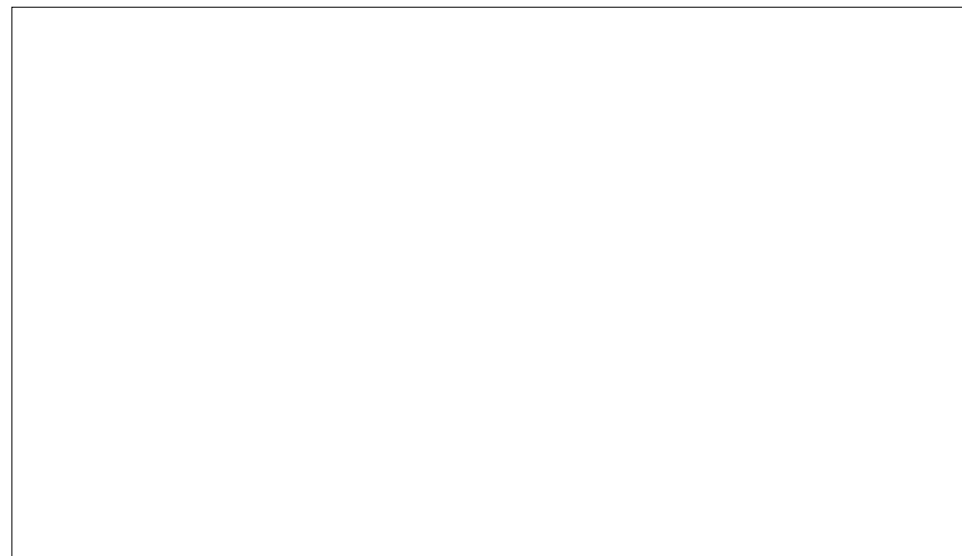
Just over half an hour earlier, Malcolm had risen to speak at New York's Audubon Ballroom.

He would doubtless have planned to tell his audience of over 400 people that a spirit of revolution was gripping the world.

## Colonial

And, that the struggle of black people in the US was deeply connected to the fight against colonial oppression in Africa and Asia. He might also have explained why capitalism creates racism.

Among the large crowd were several who wanted to silence Malcolm. For ten years he had helped lead the black separatist group, the Nation of



**MALCOLM X outside his house after it had been firebombed. He was killed days later**

Islam. But he had turned on them during the course of the last year.

As Malcolm took to the podium, three men jumped up from the crowd and shot him repeatedly in the chest. Others set off a smoke bomb and deployed other decoys.

Malcolm was killed at precisely the moment he was at his most dangerous—both to the US state and to the

Nation of Islam. The FBI had riddled his organisations with spies, and many of them were in the crowd. Some were even among his innermost circle.

The state's hostility to Malcolm had grown over the last year as he toured Africa meeting those who had successfully thrown out the colonialists.

He planned to enlist the continent in his battle against

US racism. He wanted African governments to sponsor a United Nations resolution demanding human rights for black Americans.

That would have deeply embarrassed the superpower that projected itself as a land of freedom and democracy.

It could have tipped some countries into supporting the Soviet Union in the growing Cold War. During his

time abroad Malcolm also secured the backing of two rival Islamic foundations representing Saudi Arabia and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood.

That support would block the Nation of Islam from being part of the world ummah, or community, of Muslims.

The organisation was already in serious trouble over sexual revelations involving its supreme leader Elijah Muhammad.

## Interest

That meant that both the US state and the Nation of Islam had an interest in seeing Malcolm dead.

Manning Marable wrote about the murder in his majestic book, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*.

He says that a four-man kill team from the Newark branch of the Nation of Islam was almost certainly responsible for his murder.

He also charges that Nation members firebombed Malcolm's family home days earlier.

This line is lent support by the one man who remains convicted of the killing, Mujahid Abdul Halim. Halim

admitted in court that he took part in the assassination. But he also swore that his fellow defendants, Norman 3X Butler and Thomas 15X Johnson, were innocent. Those two men were exonerated last week.

Marable also believed that an insider in Malcolm's camp aided the plot—and that person could easily have been working for the state. Why, he asks, was Malcolm's experienced security team assigned to menial roles outside the ballroom, rather than guarding their leader?

He goes further to ask why the police that would normally be crawling all over a Malcolm X meeting were stationed away from the ballroom?

Why was the evidence of so many participants ignored? And why did the cops allow the crime scene to be wiped clean by janitors just three hours after the assassination?

We may never know all the details of the plot against Malcolm.

But we'll always know that the closer he moved towards revolution, the more of a threat he became.

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# Childcare system leaves parents broke and angry

With costs on the rise **Sam Ord** talks to mothers who struggle to work because of a lack of good quality, affordable and flexible childcare options

**WALTHAMSTOW'S Labour MP, Stella Creasy was told she was breaking the parliamentary rules after bringing her three month old child into the House of Commons last week.**

She's not the only one having childcare troubles.

The unavailability and rising cost of childcare for working parents hits poorer parents—and especially women—hardest.

Jesska is a parent in Staffordshire, who was forced to leave her job during the pandemic in order to care for her child.

Now she is finding it difficult to find a job that pays enough and is flexible.

She told Socialist Worker, "Childcare isn't even considered by companies—I've applied for jobs that don't allow me to pick up my son from school.

"It is an absolute miracle if you find a workplace that has an in-house nursery."

Many women are forced into second jobs to pay for childcare, or to leave work altogether because they cannot afford the fees.

That women are made to feel responsible for navigating the crisis reflects the idea that women's main role in society is that of a "caregiver".

And, the low paid but more flexible jobs that many women have to take are in turn used to suggest that women's work is secondary. It is a way of holding down all women's wages.

## Distribution

"I just couldn't work during most of the pandemic," said Jesska. "Working in distribution cannot be done from home, I was considered a key worker. It wasn't fair to leave my child with my mother—who's vulnerable—or to

send my child into a nursery with kids getting Covid.

"It got to the point where I was doing the maths and with childcare costs taken from my wage, I wouldn't be much worse off leaving the job and signing on. Jesska and her child rely on both support from her parents and child benefit but, "I only get like, £20 from them," she said.

The government claims to do enough to provide adequate childcare funding.

One initiative is 30 hours of free care each week during term time for three and four year olds. But campaigners argue the government doesn't fund these places adequately.

With the Tories relying on private companies to provide care, firms reclaim money from charging under threes more.

When asked about the impact of the rising cost of living Jesska described it as "just upsetting".

"It's definitely ruining my mental health, it also has an impact on my son that I worry about."

Women are most affected by the lack of childcare.

In a survey of 20,000 working parents, 16 percent of women said childcare hadn't affected their income or seniority at work, compared to 42 percent of men. This is beneficial to the bosses, keeping a mother at home with the children, while a male partner is able to work long hours.

Creasy and Jesska are right, parents aren't heard and we must start demanding change and public ownership of childcare services.

## Childcare prices soaring

**A THIRD** of childcare providers in Northern Ireland are planning to put up prices as they suffer inflating costs.

The research, conducted by Employers For Childcare found that a significant number of childcare providers were experiencing a "distressed" financial situation.

This expands further than just Northern Ireland.

Many childcare providers are facing closure and with government funding low, the responsibility for payment falls onto the parents.

Some 28 percent of families said they are struggling to find and afford suitable childcare.

Covid exposed the childcare crisis on a huge scale. More parents and carers are returning to work, with no furlough or additional childcare services to support them.

This doesn't just hit parents and children. Many childcare workers—95 percent of them women—suffer poverty wages.

The survey suggests that many providers say they won't be able to afford the minimum wage increase. To defend their profits they will make job cuts.

As we reach a new phase of the Covid pandemic the government must adequately fund childcare so parents have the choice to return to work or not.

## Teaching assistant says, 'My entire wage goes to childcare'

**FIFTY HOURS** of childcare each week for a child under two in nursery will set you back £13,700 on average according to Coram, a childcare charity.

The cost rose by around 4.5 percent in the year starting April 2019. Wages rose just 3.6 percent according to the Office for National Statistics.

The situation is forcing parents, usually mothers, to leave work and provide childcare themselves to keep costs down.

Sarah is a parent and teaching assistant in Shropshire. When two of her children were in nursery her "entire wage went on childcare," she told Socialist Worker.

"I changed my job because my previous job, in admin, meant I couldn't pick up my children from school and nursery—the commute was just too long.

"I got a job in a local school, doing the same thing, to fit in with school times and holidays.



Nursery care is expensive

"I didn't want to pay for childcare for three children across the holidays.

"It would have been a nightmare, I wouldn't have had any money," she added.

Sarah outlined some of the pressures mothers face in work and when trying to access childcare, "It's always been too expensive," she said.

"When I started the job, I got pregnant and had been there just long enough—to the day—to be

entitled to maternity pay.

"One of the worst things was that over the school holidays I still had to pay for childcare, despite not sending my children there."

A parent earning the average salary of £25,057 would pay 54 percent of their wage on childcare for an under two year old child.

With rent, additional children and other essential costs, the system is unsustainable.



## SCHOOLS

## Teachers slam 'Grinch' head

TEACHERS AND support staff at St Matthew's Church of England primary school in Preston are set to strike against academisation.

Members of the NEU plan walkouts on Thursday of next week, on 14, 15, and 16 December, and two more next year.

In an attempt to attack the workers, the school management revised dates for its nativity plays.

One play will clash with the strike.

NEU Preston branch secretary, Ian Watkinson said that if any events have to be scrapped, then the head teacher would be "the Grinch trying to steal Christmas".

## Battle brewing in private school trust

A HUGE fight is brewing among teachers who work for the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST) over plans to withdraw from the Teachers Pension Scheme.

Workers are also shocked by the GDST's threats to fire and rehire them to push the change through.

GDST operates 23 private schools across England and Wales, employing 1,400 staff.

Members of the NEU union—which represents 65 percent of teaching workers across the trust—were voting in an indicative ballot, set to end on Monday of next week.

NEU joint general secretary Kevin Courtney said, "There is no imperative reason to leave the scheme.

"The trust's finances are healthy as can be seen in their public accounts."

## United fight against academy plans

FOUR TRADE unions have united to stop the forced academisation of West Gate school in Leicester.

The special educational needs school was branded "inadequate" by the school inspector Ofsted in 2018.

But despite staff pulling the school up to "good" standard this year, the Department for Education (DfE) still wants to force it to become an academy.

Now pressure and protests from education unions, including the NEU, has forced DfE to say it is considering a request for the academy order to be revoked.

The NEU said, "Staff, leadership team, governing body and local authority have turned the school around in three years, in the middle of a global pandemic.

"It's an insult to the hard work of all those people that the DfE is still pressing ahead with a forced academisation."

The NEU has since written to Nadhim Zahawi, the secretary of state for education to demand the academy order be scrapped.

## TRANSPORT



THE 'SOLIDARITY bus' joins strikers on the picket line

PICTURE: GEORGE ARTHUR

## Bus drivers in South Yorkshire strike for pay

by GEORGE ARTHUR

STAGECOACH drivers, engineers and cleaners in South Yorkshire started a week-long strike for pay last weekend.

After a number of unacceptable pay offers the 560 Unite members based in Sheffield, Barnsley and Rotherham voted overwhelmingly to walk out.

Large numbers turned out to the Barnsley picket line on Sunday, up against stormy, arctic weather conditions.

One of the strikers said, "Our wages are so poor that drivers have been leaving to work at Aldi where they get similar wages without the responsibility for passenger safety."

Unite said Stagecoach has only offered its workers a low two percent pay rise, well below what the firm has offered employees in other areas of the country. The

union has won 6.5, 7.5, and 10.5 percent deals in other Stagecoach disputes.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said, "Low pay is the scourge of the bus industry right across this country.

"Stagecoach made profits touching £60 million last year and has £875 million in the bank. Yet it cannot make a decent offer to its staff."

Supporters of Better Buses for South Yorkshire (BBSY) and Barnsley TUC turned out to give solidarity to the picketers.

Fran Postlethwaite from BBSY said, "It's only by getting proper pay for drivers that we'll stop services failing to turn up because there is a shortage of drivers."

Elsewhere Unite warns of critical nationwide bus understaffing as waves of workers are leaving the low paid job to work elsewhere, such as HGV operators. The

impact of Covid and potential upcoming attacks on pensions has also triggered some workers to take early retirement.

Unite Community members brought along a cardboard 'Solidarity Bus,' which toured around all the picket lines.

Unite regional officer Phil Bown said, "Bus workers were rightly hailed as heroes during successive lockdowns.

"However, warm words do not pay the bills and Stagecoach needs to reward its workers' dedication with a decent pay award."

Pickets were set to take place at all four bus depots in South Yorkshire every day until Saturday of this week.

Workers in Sheffield were also set to strike on Saturday of this week.

There is a determination among workers to step up the action if management does not improve their offer.

●Messages of solidarity to Phil.Bown@unitetheunion.org

## CAMBRIDGESHIRE

## Cambus drivers start ballot

FOUR HUNDRED workers at Cambus Ltd in Cambridge, Peterborough and Fenstanton are balloting to strike over pay.

The drivers, engineers, cleaners and shunters haven't had a pay rise since April 2019. The ballot started last week and will run until 16 December.

Cambus Ltd is part of the highly profitable Stagecoach bus company. Bosses only offered a 1.5 percent pay offer from April 2021 with a further 1.5 percent next month for the pay year 2021-22.

Workers refused this citing the six percent inflation figure as a major reason.

Unite regional officer Mark Plumb said, "Our members should not pay for the pandemic, while the employer has readily scooped up UK taxpayer support, including cash from the furlough scheme.

"The management is now threatening to come back in 2022 to further erode our members' employment conditions—we won't allow that to happen and strikes in the New Year are very much on the cards."

## RAIL

## Staff fed up

CATERERS WORKING on trains for Rail Gourmet have announced a new round of strikes in a fight for workplace justice.

The members of the RMT union are based at Edinburgh Waverley station.

Workers have been taking action for many months as the company ignores abuse and bullying of staff.

They are demanding respect and justice in the workplace.

RMT members are now set to strike for three days from 6am on 31 December until 3 January.

## FURTHER EDUCATION

## Action wins victories at group of London colleges

AFTER TEN days of solid strikes—and plans to take six more—workers at Capital City College Group forced management to back down from attacks on conditions.

Management had imposed an inspection model that allowed lecturers to be observed, "any time, any classroom, any manager".

The policy also linked observation performance to the "capability policy," allowing staff to be fast-tracked out of the college.

But now strikes have forced bosses to agree a new policy. This will see staff having three 15 or 20 minute classroom visits a year with notification, which are ungraded and have no link to the capability policy.

The strikes also succeeded in levelling pay and holidays across the group of colleges—City and Islington, Westminster Kingsway and The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London (Conel).

Lecturers at Conel will be put on London weighting—worth £1,700—in line with other colleges in the group.

They will also be moved onto the CCCG contract, which is worth an extra £1,500 plus 3 days extra holiday entitlement.

The workers' UCU union was not successful

in winning a consolidated pay rise. But it did win a £700 one-off payment to be put in the December pay packet for all staff.

UCU accepted this on the basis that fresh negotiations on a consolidated pay rise would begin after the Easter holiday for the 2022-23 pay award.

Members also struck over workload. Bosses were made to agree to a number of new important management protocols that they must implement.

These include the a new automated system that automatically contacts students that are absent from lessons.

It means staff will no longer need to contact those students and parents after every missed lesson.

A new working group with UCU was also agreed to look at further ways to reduce workload.

Over forty new staff joined UCU across the group since the beginning of the dispute and only two have left due to dissatisfaction.

UCU now has a 91 percent density among teaching staff.

That puts staff in a very strong position to continue to defend and secure better working and learning conditions.

Sean Vernell

## FUEL POVERTY



THE NATIONAL Pensioners' Convention and Fuel Poverty Action protested outside Downing Street last week demanding action on winter deaths

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

## HOUSING

## Tenants resist evictions

DOZENS OF people protested in Custom House, east London, on Wednesday of last week to support 18 tenants facing eviction at the hands of Labour-run Newham council.

The tenants organised with People's Empowerment Alliance for Custom House (Peach) to turn 250 temporary accommodation houses into council housing last June. They had been tenants of private housing giant Mears Group.

But now Newham council is forcing 18 of these tenants to leave

their homes and return to unaffordable private renting.

The protest travelled from Custom House to Newham council offices in Royal Albert Dock, where tenants handed in a petition titled, "Don't evict us."

One resident, Mary told the protest, "I've been living in Newham for 14 years, and I have been a youth worker in Newham for about ten years.

"This is the community I have worked hard for—now we're being kicked out. As soon as our children turn 18 we're left on our own."



COUNCILS AND SCHOOLS

# All out to win vote for pay fightback

by NICK CLARK

**SOME 375,000 council and school workers across England and Wales began voting on whether to strike over pay as Socialist Worker went to press.**

Members of the Unison union are gearing up for a major battle after council bosses offered them a pay increase that's well below inflation—effectively a pay cut.

It comes after more than a decade of similar pay cuts and freezes that have left low-paid council workers struggling.

Unison activists are pushing to get a high turnout in the vote, which began on Wednesday of this week.

Jon Woods is a council worker and branch chair of Portsmouth City Unison branch. He told Socialist Worker, "The most important thing is making sure people vote. I'm convinced the majority will vote for strikes."

"When you talk to people there's a real mood around pay—especially when you link it to the Tory corruption scandals. Think of Tory



TOWER HAMLETS council workers struck in 2020

MP Geoffrey Cox sitting on a beach in the Caribbean giving so-called legal advice."

Bosses at the Local Government Association—the umbrella organisation of councils in England and Wales—offered a 1.75 percent increase, or 2.75 percent for the lowest paid, in 2021.

But the RPI rate of inflation is currently 6 percent. And, as

Unison points out, the price of some essentials, has risen even more.

It adds that the value of local government pay is a quarter lower than a decade ago. "That means, in effect, local government workers work at least a day a week for free, compared to 2010."

Jon said that four out of five people in his Unison branch who voted in a

recent consultative ballot backed strikes. "That's pretty consistent with the rest of the country," he said.

But Tory anti-union laws say that unless 50 percent of people take part in a strike ballot, strikes would be unlawful.

"The key thing is hitting the thresholds," said Jon. "We're organising phone banking, but we're also speaking to people in workplaces."

"I've been through the whole of the Civic Offices to put up 60 posters."

## Balloting

"And we're doing a pay rally on Thursday lunchtime outside the Civic Offices, with a new branch banner that says 'fair pay for school and council workers.'"

Jon added that organising now, involving workers, can also help to prepare the union for the fight,

"The very fact we're doing this stuff can build shop floor organisation," he said.

The ballot is set end on Friday 14 January.

The GMB union is also holding a consultative strike ballot that closes on 13 December.

## MANUFACTURING

### Resistance at Panasonic

AROUND 100 Workers in the GMB union struck for the second Monday in a row at Panasonic Cardiff this week.

They are set for another strike on Monday of next week at the Pontprennau site. Workers rejected an insulting 1 percent pay offer after a pay freeze last year.

The company then withdrew its pay offer, stopped talks altogether and refused mediation through Acas. Nicola Savage, GMB regional organiser said, "Our members deserve a real pay rise, and we will fight until we get them one."

■ A CONSULTATIVE strike ballot of court staff over jobs and working conditions was set to end this week.

The courts and tribunal service's Common Platform is supposed to allow all participants in a legal case to access information digitally. But the PCS union says it threatens some 3,000 jobs.

## B&Q

### Hitting back at Wincanton

SOME 475 warehouse workers at B&Q's Wincanton depot in Worksop launched a strike last Sunday.

The Unite union members voted 96 percent for action. Workers want a pay rise—the basic hourly rate for a shopfloor worker is just £9.96 an hour.

Strikers are also out against victimisation of a union rep.

A week-long strike is set to be followed by a week of overtime ban.

This two-week cycle will continue until 20 February.

B&Q is part of the Kingfisher group whose pre-tax profits were £786 million last year.

■ AROUND 50 workers who process and drive VW Group vehicles off ferries arriving in Sheerness dockyard began a strike last week that continues to 9 December over jobs and overtime terms.

## PAY

### Four fights on pay and more

WORKERS AT Chep UK, based in Trafford Park in Manchester who repair and supply pallets for transporting goods are striking over pay.

Unite union members voted 75 percent in favour of strikes, and will be out on 3, 6, 10 and 13 December. Workers will be on a continuous all out strike from 17 December if the dispute is not resolved by then.

■ REFUSE collection drivers employed by Coventry Council are balloting for strikes over pay and Christmas working arrangements.

The 70 Unite union members could be out over Christmas. The council is refusing to improve pay

rates for the drivers who are paid just £22,000 a year.

■ MERCEDES BENZ Retail Group (MBRG) is putting the brakes on plans of a pay rise to its technicians.

Workers are now driving towards a strike ballot. The 175 Unite union members at nine sites received no pay rise in 2020 and this year.

■ SCAFFOLD workers employed by Altrad at the Mitsubishi Chemicals plant in Billingham, Teesside have called off strikes.

Around 35 scaffolders, insulators and painters have accepted a pay deal that works out at 10 percent over two and a half years and a £250 one off payment. This is below inflation.

## ABORTION RIGHTS



Students defended abortion rights

PICTURE: CHELSEA HUGHES

## Liverpool students drive off anti-abortion bigots

ANTI-ABORTION bigots were met by an angry and sizeable counterprotest when they showed up at the University of Liverpool last Friday.

The handful of people first arrived in the university precinct on Thursday holding up large placards with despicable images of "aborted embryos".

They were immediately met with opposition. Students held up pro-choice signs, bedsheets and umbrellas to cover the bigots' placards. Within 24 hours, the Liverpool Socialist Worker Student Society alongside other

student groups were able to bring together over 75 students to protest when the bigots showed up again.

The spirit on the day was lively and militant despite the stormy weather. Protesters did not stop singing, chanting and demanding the bigots not just get off our campus, but off our streets.

When they were finally driven away the protest ended with a chant of "The people, united, will never be defeated!"

**Samira Ali, student, John Moores university**

## ROUND-UP

DELIVERY workers protested on Sunday outside Sheffield town hall and a local McDonald's over cuts to pay.

The members of the IWGB union also plan to strike on 6 December.

The bosses at Stuart delivery, which serves Just Eat, plan pay cuts of 25 percent. Pay will be slashed from £4.50 to £3.40 per delivery.

Delivery worker Bryn Atkinson-Woodcock said, "We should be getting a pay rise, not a pay cut. The pay at Stuart is bad as it is."

"Once you take out the rising price of fuel,

insurance, vehicle maintenance, and tax, we're making far below minimum wage. I work six to seven days a week, between eight and 12 hours and it's obliterated my savings."

■ THE THREAT of strikes has won restaurant workers at Harrods a pay rise.

Wages will now go up from £9 an hour to £12.50. Chefs will now earn over £12.50.

But workers, who are members of the Uvw union say their fight won't end there and that they will go ahead with a ballot for strikes.

## GLASGOW

### Equal pay battle returns

COUNCIL WORKERS are preparing to fight again in a long running battle for equal pay for women.

Some 97 percent of people voted for strikes in a consultative ballot by the Unison union at Glasgow City Council.

It comes after council bosses are delaying and backtracking on an equal pay settlement that workers won in 2019.

## Fought

Some 14,000 council workers—predominantly women—have fought for more than 14 years against a discriminatory pay scheme.

A 48-hour strike in 2019 brought the council to its knees and forced bosses to agree compensation payments that for many were worth tens of thousands of pounds.

But more than two years later, many women still haven't had their payments.

And now the council wants to exclude some workers from the deal.

Glasgow City Unison is asking the union to ballot its members to strike.

Unison branch officer Lyn Marie O'Hara said, "Thousands of workers, overwhelmingly women, were paid out in 2019 because their pay was unequal."

"Nothing has changed since then, it's still unequal. The same jobs in the same unequal pay scheme."

"Yet the council is now refusing to pay up and trying to exclude many jobs."

She added, "Our clear demand is don't dump the 2019 deal. The council should be under no illusion that if they continue with their current approach, that strikes will once again be coming to their door."

The GMB and Unite unions are also consulting members on action.



# SUPPORT STRIKES AT UNIVERSITIES

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

**THOUSANDS OF university workers will head to picket lines this week to fight for their pensions, pay, and against inequalities.**

Workers in 58 universities across Britain were set to strike on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Trade unionists and campaigners everywhere should back the strikes, go to picket lines and make the action a focus against the Tories.

Other institutions, who just missed the turnout threshold demanded by the anti-union laws, are reballoting and could join the action in the new year.

Workers in the UCU union, are striking as part of two separate but connected disputes.

The first is to stop bosses' body UUK assaulting pensions. The second dispute is over equal pay, casual contracts, workload and a real term pay rise—the "four

fight".

Carlo Morelli is the former president of UCU Scotland. He told Socialist Worker, "In the 2018 strikes, which transformed the union, the driver was the pensions issue that opened up all the feelings of resentment. This time it is workloads, the way the pandemic has been handled, discrimination and pay—the four fights."

"That shouldn't mean any retreat from the pension fight. It does mean people are very angry if there's an attempt to ditch the four fights or decouple those issues from pensions." Carlo added, "People are furious about management." He said the UCU WhatsApp group at Dundee university where he works "lit up" when the strikes were announced.

"People had all their plans for teach outs, a playlist for the pickets and loads more ready immediately."

Students have also been preparing to support the strikes. Sky, a student at Liverpool university, said activity "is heating up" in Liverpool ahead of the strikes.

"We've had a meeting arguing for our student union to support the strikes," she added. "And we're warning them that management is applying a lot of pressure to staff at the moment."

"We've printed out posters to create an atmosphere of solidarity."

"Of course we'll also be going down to the picket line with a banner we're making."

There was also confusion this week after activists received an email from the heads of the union about Action Short of a Strike (Asos).

Members voted for Asos in the belief that it would include no rescheduling of classes cancelled due to strikes.

But the notification to employers did not include this very basic demand. Activists are fighting to overturn the initial retreat on Asos.

But the key is to build big strikes and then escalate.

"People don't want to delay, they want confrontation," Carlo explained. "And there is a really good chance here to win escalation."

This confusion comes after UCU general secretary Jo Grady disastrously proposed that workers take just one day of strikes before Christmas.

UCU members know that much bolder action is needed to win.

For a list of who is on strike go to [bit.ly/SW1221UCU](https://bit.ly/SW1221UCU)

## Instruction

## Goldsmiths university workers strike against bankers' job cuts

WORKERS AT Goldsmiths university launched a 15 day-strike last Tuesday against bosses' plans to slash jobs at the behest of Lloyds and Natwest banks.

Hundreds of striking UCU union members, students and supporters rallied outside the south east London university to protest against "restructuring" plans that would axe 52 jobs.

Paula, who works in professional services in the sociology department, told Socialist Worker that she received an email saying her job would be "deleted". "We've

gone through a lot in professional services, especially in the last two years," she explained. "It's been horrid."

"Staff have left, and management hasn't replaced them, which means larger workloads for those who stay."

UCU Goldsmiths branch co-president Tara Povey told the crowd, "For months and months we have gone over every aspect of the redundancies."

"The financial rationale behind what they are doing is complete bullshit. They never had any



Rally outside Goldsmiths university

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

financial rationale."

Goldsmiths UCU says "senior management also claims these cuts are required by the banks

due to a deal that was struck with Lloyds Bank and Natwest bank".

Sabbu was one of the hundreds of students

who joined the protest to show solidarity. "I spent my first year of university on Zoom," she told Socialist Worker.

"I received brilliant support from my lecturers in difficult circumstances."

"After looking at each other through a screen for a year, it felt great that lecturers remembered us."

Much of the anger at the protest was directed at the warden of Goldsmiths, Frances Corner—who students and workers say has tried to avoid blame for cuts.

Tara told Socialist Worker, "Frances Corner

was at University of the Arts London before Goldsmiths.

"These figures move around to different institutions, and they pick up tricks about how to force through restructuring."

"But workers also pick up tips from those at other universities as well."

"We've taken a lot of inspiration from the disputes at Royal College of Art, Liverpool and Chester University."

Building solidarity with local battles will make strikes across Britain stronger.